

CLAIMS

1. An electronic database search engine comprising an electronic memory device suitable for storing and releasing elements from the database, a display unit, a user interface for selecting and displaying at least one element from the database on the display unit, and control means for controlling the user interface, which user interface allocates icons to the elements of the database, which icons are suitable for display on the display unit at mutual distances that depend on the elements' degree of dissimilarity, wherein the user interface at initial utilization displays at least some icons on the display unit, wherein with the control means any arbitrary position can be selected on the display unit and in that, depending on the control means, the user interface displays or removes an icon that relates to an element of the database and of which the degree of dissimilarity, in respect of the elements whose corresponding icons are displayed elsewhere on the display unit, corresponds with the distance taken up by the selected position in relation to the icons displayed elsewhere on the display unit.
2. An electronic database search engine according to claim 1, wherein the user interface adjusts the mutual positioning of the icons on the display unit in concurrence with the mutual dissimilarity of the elements from the database such as to concur with the displayed icons, in order to optimize the display area usable on the display unit.

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6. A method according to claim 5, wherein the user interface adjusts the mutual positioning of the icons on the display unit in concurrence with the mutual dissimilarity of the elements from the database such as to concur with the displayed icons, in order to optimize the display area usable on the display unit.

7. A method according to claim 5, wherein the user interface provides means for placing a selected icon permanently in the centre of the display unit, while the remaining displayed icons are subsequently grouped around it.

8. A method according to claim 5, wherein to the elements of the database characteristics are added that are involved when determining the elements' degree of dissimilarity, and that the assessment of the dissimilarities between the various characteristics of the elements is adjustable.